

GRANTEE MONITORING

Grantee Name	First Choice Pregnancy Services
Location/Address	1223 S Broadway Street, New Ulm, MN 56073
Date and Location of Site Visit	October 4, 2017, First Choice Pregnancy Services
Grantee Participants	Darcy Lund, Executive Director
MDH Participant(s)	Mary Ottman, Grant Manager
Grant Agreement #/PO #	Vendor # 0000878031

PURPOSE:

In accordance with the MDH Policy 238.01 Grantee Monitoring, MDH will conduct at least one monitoring visit per grant period on all state grants of over \$50,000, and at least annual monitoring visits on grants of over \$250,000.

The purpose of the grant monitoring visit is to review and ensure progress against the grants' goals, to address any problems or issues before the end of the grant period and to build rapport between the state agency and the grantees. This visit may cover topics such as statutory compliance; challenges faced by the grantee, modifications made to the grant program, program outcomes, grantee policies and procedures, grantee governance, and training and technical assistance needs.

The findings or information obtained through this monitoring activity will be used:

- To ascertain how MDH program funds are being utilized
- To provide targeted technical assistance needs
- To improve program implementation performance
- To suggest other training needs
- In future funding decisions

OVERVIEW

1. Is the Grantee's non-profit 501(c) 3 status current? [Yes](#)
2. Does the Grantee have a central file containing the official records for this grant agreement and/or amendment? [Yes](#)
3. Where is this central file located? [Director's office](#)

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4. Who is responsible for this central file? **Executive Director**

5. Does the central file include

- The grant proposal? **yes**
- The award letter? **yes**
- The signed grant agreement and any/all amendments? **yes**
- Any/all requests and/or approvals for scope/budget changes? **yes**
- The work plan? **yes**
- Any/all payment requests (invoices)? **yes**
- Any/all signed subcontracts? **Not applicable** (no subcontracts)
- Any/all Progress Reports? **yes**

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

1. Does the organization meet all reporting requirements as outlined in the grant agreement and/or amendment? **yes**

2. Are expenditure reports submitted timely and accurately? **yes**

3. Are progress reports submitted with all required information and in a timely manner? **yes**

CONTRACTUAL

1. Does the Grantee have written policies or procedures addressing use of contractors and/or subcontractors? **Not applicable**

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2. Were any sub-contractors paid from the MDH grant required to sign a contractual agreement outlining services to be rendered, duration of engagement, and pay rate? **Not applicable**

3. Was the contractual agreement(s) reviewed and approved by MDH before implementation? **Not applicable**

PERSONNEL POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES OF THE GRANTEE

1. Are time distribution records (e.g., time-sheets) maintained to show how employees who are funded through, or contributed in kind to, the MDH grant and who work on multiple projects/programs spend their time? **yes**

2. Do personnel and/or payroll records show dates of hire/termination, immigration status if applicable, actual hours of time worked, leave time, federal and state programs worked on, and earning for all employees who are funded through, or contributed in kind, to the MDH grant? **yes**

3. Does the Grantee have policies and procedures in writing regarding:
 - Payroll? **yes**
 - Travel? **yes**
 - Overtime? **yes**
 - Timesheets? **yes**
 - Taxes? **yes**
 - Purchasing? **yes**
 - Compensated time off? **No**

4. Are employees time sheets approved? **yes**
By whom (what position)?
By the Executive Director? **yes**

5. Does the Grantee's payroll preparation and distribution involve more than one employee? **No. It involves more than one person, but the only employee involved is the Executive Director. The Board Treasurer**

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and an accounting firm are also involved in the process.

6. Does an authorized official approve all checks before being signed? **yes**

Additional Comments:

First Choices is in their second grant cycle as a Positive Alternatives grantee. They have begun implementing best practices for their nonprofit status and as an MDH grantee.

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PROGRAMMATIC QUESTIONS

Please use this space to answer all questions.

Program History

- When was your program started? Why was it started? FCPS was started in 2010 to reduce the number of abortions in this area of Minnesota. FCPS was awarded a Positive Alternatives Grant in 2013 to expand services to include an on-going educational component.
- What need does your program fulfill? FCPS provides support, prenatal and parenting education, and resources to pregnant women and parenting women with infants
- How has the program grown or changed since its beginning? FCPS is seeing more clients with the offering of the grant funded EWYL program, ultrasound scanning, providing a single moms support group, and adding bilingual services with an outreach component.

Grantee's Target population

- Who does the organization primarily serve? FCPS primarily serves pregnant and parenting women with infants.
- What is the program's demographic and geographic coverage? FCPS serves primarily serves white, unmarried women, but anticipates serving an increased number of Latino women since bilingual services and outreach have been recently added.
- Review recent Demographic reporting. The last several Demographic reports were reviewed.

Leadership and Governance

- Effective Board: How many board members currently serve, who are they? FCPS currently has a Board of Directors comprised of 14 Board members – 6 men and 8 women. Three are non-voting members. They are married and single, parenting and non-parenting. Three members are family physicians and one member is a nurse and one member is a lawyer. Two have extensive experience with non-profit BODs
- How often do they meet? How are they informed of organization's progress and challenges? FCPS Board of Directors meet monthly and are kept apprised of what is happening with the organization through the Executive Director's report and other communication between meetings as needed, the monthly Treasurer's report, and various committee reports.
- How supportive is the Board of the program? The Board is very supportive of the

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program.

- How is the program staffed? Who is responsible for the supervision of grant staff? **The program is staffed by grant funded employees and volunteers who are supervised by the executive director.**
 - How are staff evaluated on their performance? How long have PA staff been employed there? **Staff are evaluated by observation and performance reviews completed at 6 months and then annually at date of hire. Currently there is one PA staff who has been employed for 18 months, 1 for 3 months, and one for 14 months.**
 - How are staff background checks done? **Background checks are run by the Diocese of New Ulm.**
 - What is your organization's policy on complaints for staff and clients? **Complaints can be made in writing or in person directly to the executive director who will then follow-up by investigating the complaint and taking disciplinary action if needed. A signed notation will be added to the employees file.**

Budget

- Does the current budget reflect your work plan activities? **yes**
- Is the budget accurate for the project size/scope? **yes**
- Do you have any challenges with the budget or invoicing? **no**
- Has your Financial Reconciliation taken place? **no**
- If you have an elevated risk designation, and/ or your Financial Reconciliation report cited any concerns, these will be discussed.

Review Work Plan including:

Partners

- If applicable: how are people referred to the program? Are there any barriers encountered with referral sources? What is your most common referral source? **Referrals come primarily from family and friends, but we also have clients referred from Public Health, Family Services, area churches, and family physicians. We've not encountered any significant barriers with referral sources.**
- Challenges with partners or specific counties? **Our biggest challenge is our policy of not providing contraceptives. County service providers and some school personnel have stated their hesitancy to refer to us because of our policy.**

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Work Plan

- Review your 2016 – 19 grant application’s description of the program you are asking to be funded. On your work plan note the services and activities you said you would provide and the number of clients you would serve.
- **Prepare a short summary of your current program(s) and the number of clients being served.** How does what you describe in the application compare with what you are currently providing? Have any programs and/or activities or services been added or removed? Have the number of clients being served per quarter decreased or increased since June 2016? Is there anything in particular you want to share about your current program to explain its current status?

The Positive Alternative Grant monies are used for the Earn While You Learn educational program, Moms’ Support Group, Ultrasound program, and beginning in July 2017, for bilingual services. They allow FCPS to purchase baby equipment and supplies, and pay a part-time advocate to co-ordinate the program; hire a support group leader to coordinate and lead group gatherings focused on learning life skills and networking with other moms; pay a nurse to perform ultrasound scans; and hire a bilingual advocate to provide outreach and services to the Latino community.

The original goal for the 2016-2019 grant cycle was to serve 35 women through parenting education, pregnancy education, mentoring, and intake and referral services and during the first three quarters of the 2016-2017 grant cycle 47 women have received services. The goal for the life skills support group was 15 women and so far 19 women have been served. The goal of the ultrasound program was to serve 28 women and so far 29 ultrasounds have been performed. We feel the program has been successful and is well received in the community with referrals coming from Social Services, Public Health, local physicians, area schools and churches.

- Do you anticipate making any changes to the 2017-18 Work Plan? If so, in what way and for what reasons?

Not at this time.

Participants:

- What type of outreach does the organization put into action? What is working well? What are more the challenging aspects to finding or retaining clients? **Being more intentional about outreach is a goal for 2017 -2018. Facility renovations are**

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complete and staff are in place and trained, the focus can shift to more outreach, including having a bilingual staff person going to Madelia 2x/month. At this point outreach has been limited to speaking in schools when invited, a Facebook page and website, and networking with community agencies. Challenges to retaining clients include transportation difficulties, and clients just not keeping appointments.

Data:

- How is program data collected and by whom? Is data collected useful to agency? **Program data is collected by all staff with client contact and then compiled by the executive director. Data has been useful for feedback to donors and BOD.**
- Anything we can do to help or simplify data collection?

Review Evaluation

- Your 2015-16 Evaluation Report Summary will be discussed (If you were a past grantee).
- Your 2016-17 Evaluation Plan will be reviewed. Any suggestions provided in your 2015-16 Report Summary should be included in the plan, if you are continuing a similar evaluation. If you are planning a new evaluation, details will be discussed. Do you have any questions on your evaluation?

The new evaluation project for Year 2 will include reviewing breastfeeding initiatives with clients and local agency referrals for clients.

Miscellaneous

- Anything else you would like to share?
- Anything else we haven't asked?

What can we do to help?

- Trainings and Grantee meetings useful for grantee? Any topic suggestions?
- Feedback or suggestions for the state?
- Is there any way MDH can assist you to better equip your success in the Positive Alternatives Grant Program?
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Summary:

First Choices Pregnancy Services has experienced a major staff change since the last site visit. The founding Executive Director (ED) since 2010 has retired and a new director has been hired. The newly hired ED began her tenure this summer and was able to be trained by the outgoing ED. As an established nonprofit in the New Ulm area, the new ED has a good track record to follow.

One area of challenge for the new Ed will be increasing community outreach and connections as she gets

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accustomed to her new role. It is her goal to increase the visibility of the Center, thus ultimately impacting the number of clients who walk through the door. The staff realize that community connections need to be remade and efforts to work alongside new partners need to be forged for the Center to remain viable and thriving. Servicing a wider area of nearby south central Minnesota was also discussed as there is little assistance available for women in unplanned pregnancy situations in many of the outlying small communities. Initially First Choice has recently established twice a month services with a Hispanic staff member in Madelia, approximately 30 miles south of New Ulm to service the largely Hispanic population in the area. It was suggested that because Madelia is half way between First Choices and another PA grantee, Options Pregnancy Center, it may be a good idea to join forces to provide services to this rural area.

This grantee has been the recipient of an additional award and funding for years 2 and 3 of the grant cycle. Questions and discussion on the impact of the new budget and program reporting were discussed. Evaluation expectations were also pointed out. Future planning for the organization was a topic of discussion. The staff realize that they have an exciting opportunity with new staff to reassess the direction of the Center.

Car seat training was a concern. Staff would like to have training for state certification for car seat safety training. The grant manager will send the staff information on statewide training for car seat safety instruction by a certified car seat technician.

Cradle of Hope as a grantee resource was also discussed. Staff plan to reach out and make a connection with their organization for pack n play distribution and financial assistance for their clients.

Please check your quarterly program update reporting number under the category, "Material Assistance." I believe these numbers may be under reported. Also it is recommended as discussed at your site visit, that you pursue offering the FEM protocol locally for clients as an alternative for family planning. Staff were already interested and attending the training.

Although changes in staff can be a challenge for any organization, the new ED transition for First Choices seems to be going seamlessly. Throughout the transition they have continued to maintain and manage their PA grant responsibility. I look forward to the continued partnership with First Choices as a grantee with the Positive Alternatives Grant Program for the remainder of the grant cycle.

Date: October 10, 2017

Grant Manager: Mary Ottman